

SECAC Meeting, July 28, 2009

The following people attended the June SECAC meeting. They are:

Lillie Bond

Mike McLaughlin

Gail Voigt

Tjameika Purnell Davenport

Shirl Brown

Mary Bell (PGCPS)

Introductions

The minutes of the June, 2009 SECAC were approved with updates.

Mary Bell gave a Special Education update. Professional Development is part of every teachers' record. Teachers must accrue a certain number of Professional Development hours in a 5 year period in order to update their Teaching Certificate. A member wanted to know if principals could review the teachers Professional Development record as this was a way in which principals could plan school improvement. Mary Bell indicated that principals could review their staffs' Professional Development. Professional Development is becoming much more flexible as it can be school-based which means that it can be given at the school-site and given for a specific purpose. This method of delivering Professional Development can be more cost-effective. Professional Development is not only coursework or in-service training but it can be earned by attending conferences. A parent questioned if parents could review a teacher's Professional Development record. Parents cannot but the parent can find out if the teacher is 'Highly Qualified'. Parents will also receive a letter if their student's teacher is not 'Highly Qualified'. At this point, all teachers in PGCPS should be 'Highly Qualified' as teachers have been let go if they did not meet the Teacher Certificate criteria. Mary Beth also mentioned that Beth Jayatae could speak on how a parent can better communicate with teachers and principals.

Mike McLaughlin brought up the Board of Education letter which had been written but not yet sent whose purpose was to inform the Board of Education that several special education teachers and supervisors that had a great deal of experience were in danger of being relieved from their specialized positions (but not 'laid off') due to union 'bumping rights'. It appears that all 'bumping' has been completed at this time. The Board of Education letter has not been sent at this time and there are no immediate plans to do so because it appears that a number of the teachers and supervisors have not been permanently 'bumped' as had been previously feared. It is also the policy of the PGCPS that staff in specialized skill positions cannot be replaced by staff whose experience would limit their ability to fulfill the mission of the specialized skill positions.

Mike re-iterated the point that one of the ways in which special education issues can remain in the Board of Education eye, is to speak at each Board of Education meeting about the SECAC or a special education issue, service or event.

It was suggested that the SECAC have an Open House/Information night during the September SECAC meeting so that parents can meet Pamela Downing-Hosten, Mary Bell and other staff and exchange ideas and information.

Mike with Dr Downing-Hosten and others had a meeting with Dr Hite concerning UDL. Delegate Pena-Melnyk has suggested putting UDL language in COMAR. The State PTA has expressed support. Dr Grasmick would like to see something in writing.

A letter concerning the 21 year age-out issue has been sent to Dr Carol Ann Heath. The 21 year age-out issue is important because certificate students with late summer birthdays may or may

not receive an additional year of education depending on the county of residence. Dr Heath has not responded in writing to the letter. Dr Heath has indicated the legislature needs to address this issue. There will be a SECAC/SESAC meeting in Columbia, Md in which Mike McLaughlin will be attending. Dr Heath will be there and Mike will bring up the age-out 21 issue.

Mike McLaughlin also brought up that Ricky Sabia who conducted a UDL presentation last spring here at the ARC of Prince George's County created CDs of the presentation.

The meeting was called at 7:50 PM.

Sincerely,

Gail Voigt
Secretary